

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-6, 9-19 and 28-31 are currently being prosecuted.

The Examiner has required an election in the present application between:

The first embodiment including claims 1-6, 28 and 29 and the Second embodiment including claims 9-19, 30 and 31.

First, Applicants question the necessity of an Election of Species at this point. The Examiner has already provided two full actions on both embodiments. Applicants question why it is necessary to elect one species at this time for examination when the Examiner has already provided two actions on both species. It would appear that no additional work is involved in continuing to keep the species together. Further, the Examiner has had no difficulty in the past providing an action for both species. In view of this, Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider the Election of Species and remove the same.

However, in order to be responsive, Applicants elect the Species of Embodiment I including claims 1-6, 28 and 29 with traverse.

Applicants traverse the requirement as being unnecessary, as noted above.

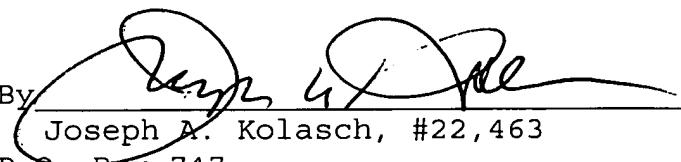
In view of the above, Applicants request that the requirement be removed and that an action on the merits be presented.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Robert F. Gnuse (Reg. No. 27,295) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By   
Joseph A. Kolasch, #22,463  
P.O. Box 747  
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747  
(703) 205-8000

JAK/RFG/mlr  
0152-0577P